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INTEGRATING MOTORCYCLE RIDER EDUCATION AND LICENSING

Motorcycle rider education and licensing are acknowledged as two effective means to reduce highway crashes involving motorcycles. Since different agencies often manage and deliver education and licensing, the effort is usually not coordinated. State agencies test applicants and issue motorcycle operator licenses while other public or private sector organizations offer rider education and training courses. In many cases these education programs are a component of state-funded motorcycle safety programs.

Currently there are 42 state-legislated rider education programs in the United States and all but one state require motorcycle operator licenses. In most states the education and licensing components are handled by different, often independent agencies. The state licensing agency administers the testing and issuance of licenses while a separate group delivers rider education.

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation, the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) met to discuss the benefits and potential difficulties of an integrated education and licensing approach. The results of the workshop, sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) have been documented in a manual, titled *Integrating Motorcycle Rider Education and Licensing, Guidelines for Motor Vehicle Administrators*.

The manual identifies the attributes and characteristics of a model motorcycle rider education and licensing program and discusses

operational concerns such as the type of agency which should be approved to administer the tests and criteria for skill test examiners.

This manual will be useful to any jurisdiction that is considering integrating their education and licensing programs. There are sections covering issues about current practices of rider education and licensing in the United States, the rationale for adopting an integrated rider education and licensing system, potential liabilities that should be considered, and how to assign responsibility for the new system.

The manual features a recommended program which was developed by delegates at the workshop. It is modelled after AAMVA's Commercial Driver License Third Party Testing Program and strives to achieve consistency in the language used for regulations, legislation, and legal agreements.

There are guidelines for selecting agencies that will deliver the integrated program and those that will administer the licensing test. It outlines the model program requirements, audit and inspection information, and includes an example of a model agreement between the licensing authority and the rider education and license testing agency.

For additional information, or for a copy of *Integrating Motorcycle Rider Education and Licensing, Guidelines for Motor Vehicle Administrators* contact: Diane E. Wigle, Safety Countermeasures Division, NTS-23, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590 or send a fax to (202) 366-7721.

